COMPOST the CORPORATIONS

WEAVING DREAMS INTO REALITY...

Vol. ☆ Issue 2

Imagine...beyond visualizations,
beyond passivity's
daydream fantasies...
Imagine a future, real, viable,
achievable;
birthed from the festering compost
of corporate society,
from the industrialized labor pains
of wage slavery;
A real future: where land
belongs to all relations in common;
the winged ones, finned ones,
clawed ones, crawling ones,
fluttering ones, and walking,
dancing, running ones;
where all have an inherant right
to be on this earth
-our common home-
into which we all are born;
where each has sovereignty
over self,
free from the oppression and bloody
conquests of "his-story";
where each has power within their
own self, their own destiny,
becoming their own leader -
free to dance into societal reality
the best of their dreams-
and together
in cooperation with others
create an "our-story" where-in
all are respected,...compassion
sharing, caring, creativity,
diversity, craftship, play and
-it are interwoven
-embodied in a society where
existence is a celebration
of life and dreams
nature and wonder...
where no few have power over
the many...
Imagine... cities where the streets
have become: gardens, woodlands
with weaving paths, playgrounds;
where the intersections in
neighborhoods
throughout towns
have become fire circles
where neighbors and friends
can gather
celebrate with music, stories,
theatre and dance;
where office buildings
-once paper pushing palaces
of corporate profit inanity-
are now housing for homeless,
schools, art studios, craftshops;
where streams, creeks, springs
are released from beneath
the asphalt and concrete pipes
of their current imprisonment;
where polluting toxins are forbidden;
where labor is shared, elders
are respected, young are cherished...
then realize
all is possible
if we only dare
to create
the dream together...

-asante

ENDING CORPORATE RULE
Old Lessons, New Directions

by Karen Coulter

Today evidence of corporate domination over ecosystems, communities and our culture is everywhere --from corporations virtually running our universities to corporate lobbyists and PAC money buying politicians and governing on the federal level. We live in a mass culture of manufactured consent where the media is corporate-controlled, public events are corporate-sponsored and increasingly, public services are privatized and public spaces are taken over by corporate interests. Products are now produced with the sole purpose of corporate profit, not public welfare, such as the Monsanto corporation's Bovine Growth Hormone, which makes dairy cows seriously ill, further depresses milk prices in a glutted market by forcing cows to produce even more milk, drives small dairy farmers out of business and is now suspected of causing cancer.

Yet what is even more insidious is the effect corporatization of our culture has on our minds, on our ability to imagine a different reality and to act like self-governing people by making our institutions serve the public welfare and protect the environment. Instead, we let our creations--like crazed robots with no human values--control us.

The idea that corporations can and do rule us--if we allow them--is not new. President Franklin D. Roosevelt observed that: "The liberty of a democracy is not safe if the people tolerate the growth of private power to a point where it becomes stronger than their democratic State itself. That, in its essence, is Fascism--ownership of government by an individual, by a group, or any controlling private power."

When people live within a culture of privatized power, common sense leaves them. People cease to trust their eyes and ears, to rely on their own experiences. Their minds --our minds--become colonized. We become like rats in a maze, not looking over the barriers between us set up by corporate control to see that we are all in the same fix and that there are other ways to live that make far more sense--just outside the maze.

What lies outside the corporate maze? How can we redefine corporations so they serve the people and the earth rather than enslave us? It helps to have some historical perspective, to piece together the hidden our story of attempts to build real Democracy by removing social and economic hierarchies of oppression. It is important to realize that little more than one hundred years ago, corporations in the U.S. were not allowed the powers they have today. As a result of the American Revolution, a paper-making corporation was only allowed to make paper, not lobby government officials or influence public opinion through advertizing or donations to charity. Corporations were not allowed to buy out other corporations, to amass wealth and power by getting bigger and bigger. They were not allowed to exist perpetually but were only allowed limited time-frames in which to operate--after ten to twenty years, they automatically ceased to exist. Most

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importantly, corporations had to serve the public welfare. If a corporation exceeded the limited authority given to it by the people, enfranchised citizens had the right to initiate "Quo warranto" proceedings--literally, "By what authority"--to determine if the corporation had exceeded its authority and should be dissolved by revoking its charter. This was essentially a death penalty given to the corporation. The burden of proof was not on the citizen, but on the corporation and the issue was not how many laws the corporation violated or how big a fine should be paid in restitution but rather the effect of the totality of the actions the corporations had been engaged in and whether that exceeded the purpose for which the corporation was created or otherwise failed to serve the public welfare.

These restrictions on the powers of a corporation were due to the revolutionists' experience with being oppressed and ruled by the corporations chartered by the British Crown. These corporations, chartered to serve various imperialist missions such as taking over new lands and profiting from the slave trade, were subordinate to the authority of the British monarch, who could institute Quo warranto proceedings and dissolve them if they exceeded their given authority. It is important to realize that such corporations were often given the power to be governing bodies in their new conquered jurisdictions. Their job was to limit competition, to gain exclusive monopoly privilege, to buy cheap, to sell dear, control the settling of disputes and to destroy whole cultures and ecosystems in order to achieve those ends. This is still how corporations operate.

The crown corporations were the principal mechanisms of colonization, settlement and destruction of the American continent and islands called the "New World". It took a couple of hundred years for the American colonists to figure out that they didn't have to be ruled by absentee entities. The governors through the king determined who was a person, what was property, who could grow this, who had to do what--much as corporate heads largely define these definitional matters today. There were people at the time who said, "Let's negotiate. Let's get the king to act in a more socially responsible way. Let's get the Parliament to be more accountable." But a king acts like a king, just as a corporation follows its own imperatives. So the revolutionists took sovereignty from the king by force of arms and invested it in the new American citizens. They transformed the private corporations into constitutionalized states with state governments and legal systems. If you go back and look at early state constitutions, the very first line is that all power is vested in the People. The revolutionists determined that they were not going to negotiate with a supreme power but instead govern themselves and be accountable to each other. They decided to define themselves, their relationships with each other, their relationships with investment, with work and with the natural world.

Today, however, we are letting ourselves be defined by corporations, institutions originally created in this country to serve the public welfare. We are no longer governing ourselves or emphasizing accountability to each other. How did this change come about?

There was a fatal problem, a fundamental structural defect in the American Revolution. A minority of people in the colonies were strong enough and organized enough to define the majority of humans as non-persons or property. African Americans, native people, women, white men without property, debtors and indentured servants were all considered property or non-persons at the time of the Revolution. In fact, corporations received the status of personhood and the rights of citizens before native people, African Americans and women. So it was not a democracy except for a minority of people. The stage was set so that when the heads of corporations tried to seize power for these legal fictions, the people were already divided. The entire history of the U.S. has involved whole classes of people having to struggle and organize for basic civil and political rights, just as today gays and lesbians, immigrants and others still don't have all the rights assumed to be the American heritage.

Because of these divisions in the body politic, it has been easy

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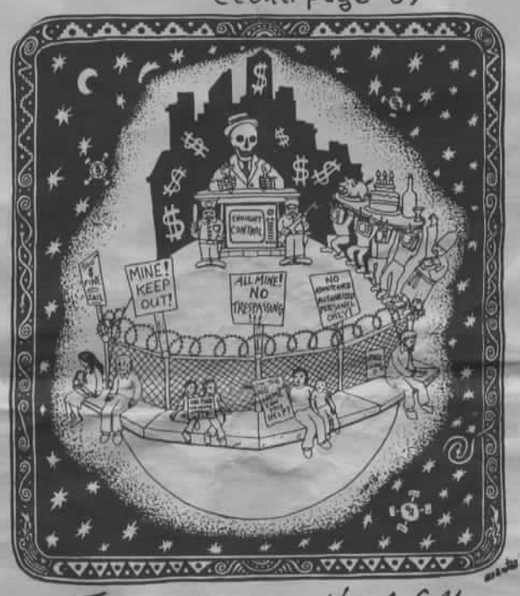

Tearing Down the Walls of the Corporate Maze

by Karen Coulter

At a regional barter fair, I asked many of the people who came to our booth to trade what they thought of the idea of dismantling the whole corporate system of oppression and ecological destruction, of making corporations accountable to the people and a biocentric value system. The people asked represented a cross section from right wing militia and survivalists to back-to-the-land "hippy"-types and left wing activists. Their response was fairly evenly divided between "Great idea, but how can we possibly do it?" and "There's no way; corporations already control everything." Both responses suggest the need to break down perceived barriers to dismantling corporate rule and to demonstrate positive alternatives to our corporate-dominated societal lifestyles. Below are eight common perceived barriers to ending corporate rule (each in quotation marks, as a statement), followed by tools of perception to de-code the corporate colonization of our minds and reveal alternative strategies and positive actions which, when combined, could displace corporate domination.

1. "The problem is too immense."

As Margaret Mead, the anthropologist, has pointed out, the power of the individual should never be underestimated, as major social changes have always been brought about by committed groups of individuals. The power of collective action has been demonstrated by the historic wins of the civil rights movement, the anti-war movement, the labor movement, the anti-nuclear movement, and the wilderness and forest movements. Otherwise we would not have many of the rights taken for granted today or much of the last wild areas that still remain. All of these have been only incremental victories. We must continue the struggle on a broader scale, reclaiming our inherent empowerment, and change the corporate-set ground rules which keep us separate, fighting issue by issue, and which keep our victories incremental.

2. "We all depend on corporations."

No, we depend on things we already have independent of corporations--trees, land, water, air, each other. Look at where dependency on corporations is leading us: to polluted air and water, no intact forests, sick and dying people, a depleted ozone layer and global warming, inequitable distribution of resources and services, many poor and a few rich and powerful--is this something we can depend on to meet our needs?

3. "It is not realistic or politically feasible to fight corporate power."

What is considered politically feasible or "realpolitik" has been fed to us by those in power to bolster their control. The same argument was espoused by those who benefited from slavery and many other ills since ended by peoples' struggles. What doesn't look realistic to those immersed in Washington, D.C. corruption must look necessary to us if we are not to blindly follow corporations to a collective global suicide, the end of Nature, which is our source of life and survival.

4. "Corporate control is inevitable; we don't have any power to change the situation."

Actually, corporate rule is a relatively recent phenomenon that has only developed in the U.S. over the last 220 years or so since the American Revolution. Citizens used to decide the fate of the corporate fictions they created, not vica-versa, holding the legal authority to determine the purpose and longevity of the corporation and to revoke corporate charters ("kill" the corporation) if corporations acted beyond their given authority or not in the public interest. In some countries (eg. the so-called "Third World"), the rise of corporate power is even more recent. There are still some indigenous peoples whose minds have yet to be colonized by corporate brain-washing, people who have much to teach the rest of us. The globalization of corporate power is still being consolidated. We still have a chance to stop it but must act decisively and quickly to prevent further take-overs of the commons, sustainable cultures, and public spheres of self-governance by corporate entities. We must assert the sovereignty that is inherent within us.

5. "Decisions are made behind closed doors; we have no way of influencing them."

The worst decisions (such as starting a war or determining that a species may be driven to extinction) are always made behind closed doors. Yet this opens up an avenue for us to build a powerful mass movement through public outrage over the flagrant violations of democratic process. It is up to us to expose this lack of legitimacy and make use of it. Politicians are dependent on our votes; corporations are dependent

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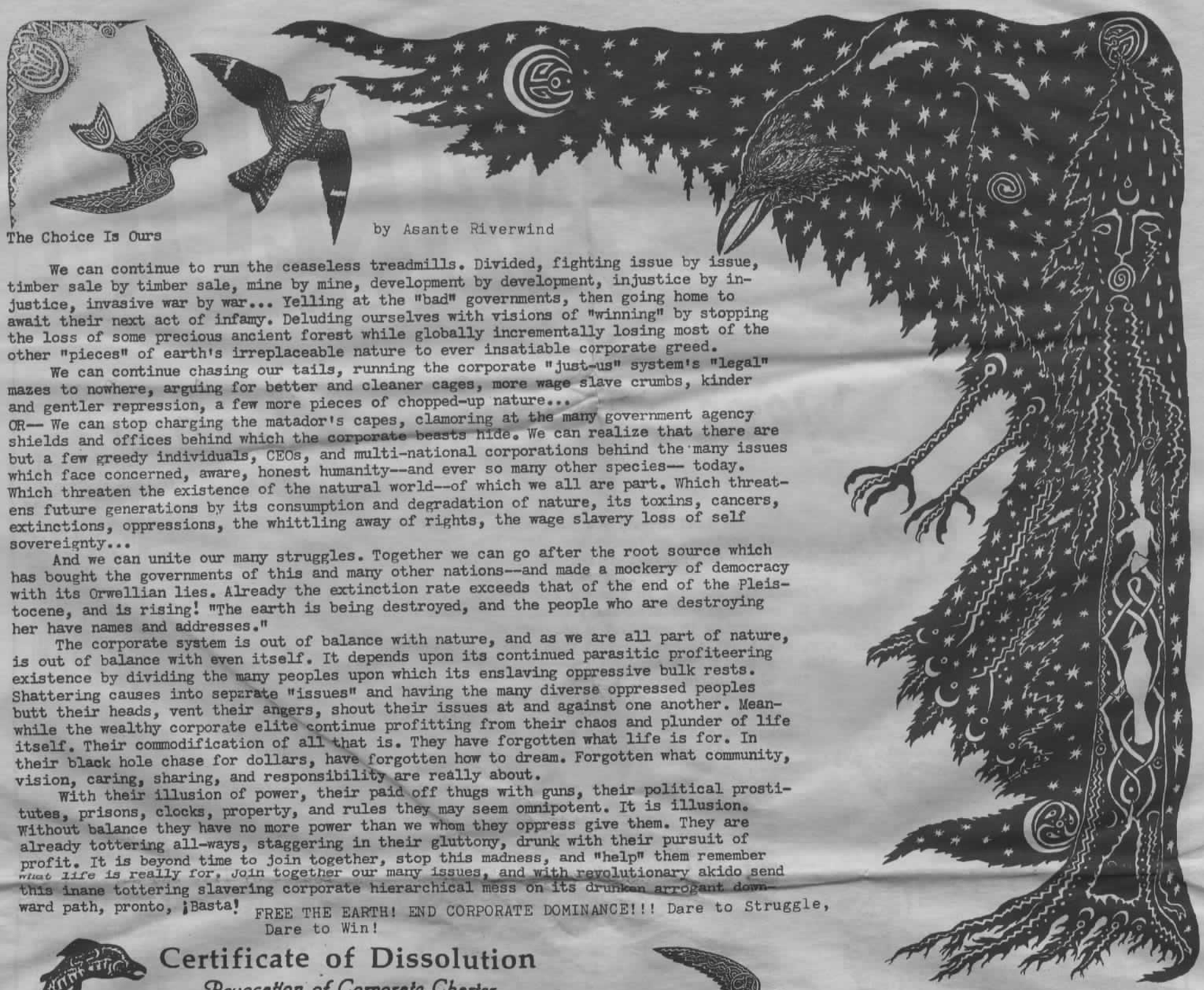


The Choice Is Ours

by Asante Riverwind

We can continue to run the ceaseless treadmills. Divided, fighting issue by issue, timber sale by timber sale, mine by mine, development by development, injustice by injustice, invasive war by war... Yelling at the "bad" governments, then going home to await their next act of infamy. Deluding ourselves with visions of "winning" by stopping the loss of some precious ancient forest while globally incrementally losing most of the other "pieces" of earth's irreplaceable nature to ever insatiable corporate greed.

We can continue chasing our tails, running the corporate "just-us" system's "legal" mazes to nowhere, arguing for better and cleaner cages, more wage slave crumbs, kinder and gentler repression, a few more pieces of chopped-up nature...

OR— We can stop charging the matador's capes, clamoring at the many government agency shields and offices behind which the corporate beasts hide. We can realize that there are but a few greedy individuals, CEOs, and multi-national corporations behind the many issues which face concerned, aware, honest humanity--and ever so many other species— today. Which threaten the existence of the natural world--of which we all are part. Which threatens future generations by its consumption and degradation of nature, its toxins, cancers, extinctions, oppressions, the whittling away of rights, the wage slavery loss of self sovereignty...

And we can unite our many struggles. Together we can go after the root source which has bought the governments of this and many other nations--and made a mockery of democracy with its Orwellian lies. Already the extinction rate exceeds that of the end of the Pleistocene, and is rising! "The earth is being destroyed, and the people who are destroying her have names and addresses."

The corporate system is out of balance with nature, and as we are all part of nature, is out of balance with even itself. It depends upon its continued parasitic profiteering existence by dividing the many peoples upon which its enslaving oppressive bulk rests. Shattering causes into separate "issues" and having the many diverse oppressed peoples butt their heads, vent their angers, shout their issues at and against one another. Meanwhile the wealthy corporate elite continue profitting from their chaos and plunder of life itself. Their commodification of all that is. They have forgotten what life is for. In their black hole chase for dollars, have forgotten how to dream. Forgotten what community, vision, caring, sharing, and responsibility are really about.

With their illusion of power, their paid off thugs with guns, their political prostitutes, prisons, clocks, property, and rules they may seem omnipotent. It is illusion. Without balance they have no more power than we whom they oppress give them. They are already tottering all-ways, staggering in their gluttony, drunk with their pursuit of profit. It is beyond time to join together, stop this madness, and "help" them remember *what life is really for.* Join together our many issues, and with revolutionary akido send this inane tottering slavering corporate hierarchical mess on its drunken arrogant downward path, pronto, ¡Basta!

FREE THE EARTH! END CORPORATE DOMINANCE!!! Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win!

Certificate of Dissolution

Revocation of Corporate Charter

EXXON*MITSUBISHI*BOISE CASCADE*CHASE MANHATTEN*PEABODY COAL*
WEYERHAEUSER*MONSANTO*BANK OF AMERICA*DUPONT*MCDONALDS*IBM*
MAXXAM*SHELL*NIKE*CHAMPION*BECHTEL*INTERFOR*NBC*ABC*CBS*GM*
FORD*CROWN PACIFIC*LOUISIANA PACIFIC*DOW ELANCO*GEORGIA
PACIFIC*SANDOS*NORPAC*AMOCO*RALSTON PURINA*WILBUR ELLIS*GE*
MICROSOFT*ATLANTIC RICHFIELD*WILLAMETTE TIMBER*CHRYSLER*
RHONE POLENC*BOEING*MCDONNEL DOUGLAS*MORTON*TELEDYNE WACHANG*
SCOTT*POPE & TALBOTT*JOHN HANCOCK*BECKER UNDERWOOD*PLATTE
CHEMICAL*UNION CARBIDE*and numerous nefarious others...

The above listed corporations are guilty of gross felony criminal conduct. Corporations operating within the United States are chartered or licensed in the name of the citizens of the states. Corporations are mandated to operate within the bounds of law, and for the long-term interests and well being of the people and communities. Instead these corporations have repeatedly violated state, local, federal, and international laws. They have irreparably degraded the environment nationally and/or worldwide. They are one of the major causes in the irretrievable and impending extinction of numerous species. They are responsible for repeated releases of carcinogens and toxic pollutants. They have violated Native sovereignty, treaty rights, and destroyed numerous Native sacred sites. They illegally obtained much of their lands and assets through fraudulence and corruption. They have played a dominant and contributing role in the corporate control and corruption of Congress and the American political systems through corporate financing/buying of politicians. They have consistently attempted to decieve the public to hide the reality that they have destroyed and degraded millions of acres of irreplaceable lands. They continue to profit from the plunder and usurpation of the ecological heritage of future generations while nature, people, and communities suffer the severe adverse consequences.

The above corporations are in violation of State laws prohibiting criminal conduct, provisions of State constitutions mandating corporations to act for the good of the people, as well as various Federal laws (the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, etc.) and the Constitution of the United States. The requirements and decrees of State laws provide for the involuntary dissolution and revocation of all charters, licenses, permits, and property of violating corporations, including the seizure of their assets. These assets are to be used to provide for the restoration of the degraded lands (providing employment for generations), the economic well being of affected dependent communities, restitution to Native peoples-including the return of Native lands, the return of illegally taken public lands, and compensation to peoples of other states and countries for irreparable damages incurred by these corporations in their illegal destructive quest for profits.

The people of the U.S. retain the unalterable right to revoke the charter of corporations which violate the common good. Originally, after the American Revolution, charters were rarely granted, and often revoked. Corporate assets were seized and distributed to compensate for damages and the corporate owners were held accountable for their criminal acts. Today we must re-invoke this right. In addition, the inalienable rights of the existence of numerous species of life upon this earth demand this revocation.

Therefore be it ordained by the powers and laws of the people and the higher laws of nature, that all licenses, charters, and permits of the above listed corporations be revoked and all of their assets be seized and appropriately redistributed.

Inform yourself further by writing the organizations listed on the last page for more information. Spread the word through presentations, workshops, letters to the editor, direct actions, fliers, newspaper articles, newsletters, radio interviews, ballot initiatives, general strikes/no work celebrations, movements to amend state constitutions, by talking to friends, neighbors, family and co-workers. Join the group listed nearest you to work together, or start your own with these groups' advice. Most importantly, join us in acting now, before it is too late.

!WAKE UP!

We're All out on a limb

by Asanta' Riverwind

Townsend's Big-eared Bat

Great Grey Owl

Pileated Woodpecker

White-headed, Black-backed, & Three-toed woodpeckers

Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Fisher

Goshawk

Pine Marten

Pygmy & Flammulated Owls

Wolverine

Tailed-Frog

Salmon

Bull Trout

Imagine the land around you just a few hundred years ago: No roads nor roar of engines, no fences nor dams (but for those of beaver), no clear-cut vistas of "harvested" forests...wildlife abounded, wolves' howls filled the night, grizzly roamed the prairies, and salmon returned in rivers and streams in numbers far beyond the ability of modern scientific surveys to even begin to accurately count. Pure waters bubbling from uncontaminated springs, coursing in unpolluted streams and rivers...

But now, civilization has touched these once natural lands of "wasted resources" with its insatiable hand of progress. Built upon the violence of invaders, the blood of natives, slaves, and laboring poor, the plunder of the natural lands and wildlife -Modern society rushes a frenetic pace chasing $ amidst the toxic cesspool of its own creation. And while scheduled clocks dictate the allowed events of domesticated lives, the natural world is fast disappearing.

The forest dependent species on this page are only a few of the many thousands of species throughout the earth that we are beginning to lose. Others humans have already pushed into the abyss of extinction. All play many crucial roles within the earth's ecosystems—and all have an inherant right to exist.

Still the human clamor continues, for more: "roads, timber, mining, grazing, gas and oil, increased production, and 'new technologies. The natural world relegated to the status of resources" (including "employable" wage-slave humans), making the wealthy richer while technology chases its toxic tail. Similar to addicts in denial of their addiction—unable to see the destructive tumult of their actions—the pattern of societal progress continues, a millenas long path of devastation left in its wake.

People turn a blind eye to the unhealthy "managed" forests, the cancers in "clean country air" —from pesticides and herbicides, and the accumulated pile of carcinogenic techno-foods and plastic junk. Ignored are the rising tides of human population, the growing traffic and polluting fumes, the nights' stars fading from the illuminated skies of towns becoming cities.

But on removing the blinders and looking back on civilizations' paths through the centuries of conquests, invasions, and empires' plunder, to the various "birthplaces" of civilization, the present finds perspective:

* Over seven thousand years ago the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys, flowing from Turkey's mountains through Iraq towards the sea, were forested ecosystems with diverse wildlife species—a lush land rich in plant and animal life. Portions of Arabia, Oman, the Negev, and Sinai deserts, Lebanon, and North Africa were also once forests. Today much of these areas are desert-like and barren. They are not however, a natural desert, like the Mojave, rich in its own numerous varieties of wildlife. Over many centuries, humans have turned these areas into biological wastelands incapable of supporting the wealth of diversity found in a natural desert. Now even goats have a difficult time finding enough forage.

We're here but in passing, a dance in a dream,... the earth is not ours to "own," she belongs to the wildlife and future generations of all life, yet to be born...

* Once almost half of China -670 million acres- was forested. This ecosystem has long since collapsed, with many of its unknown wildlife species vanished into extinction. Now this regions riversystems suffer from deadly floods and the heaviest siltation levels in the world.

* Over 4,500 years ago, the Indus River valley of Western India was home to tigers, water buffaloes, elephants, rhinos, bears, and numerous other species, including some we'll never know. Due to centuries of Empires and agriculture, this area is now semi-arid desert, and also suffers from severe flooding.

* The forests of Europe have been hacked away from ancient celtic, through Roman, to "modern" times. Most of the original forests and wildlife are gone. From the deforested, depleted soils of Ireland and the British Isles, the sickly forests of Germany, to barren lands in Spain and Greece, Europe's forests have been severely ravaged, and in many places former forested ecosystems are well on their way to joining their predecessors in the Mid-East, Africa, and Asia. Meanwhile, in Germany, people are excited if they are lucky enough to see a wild squirrel.

* In North America we can see an earlier stage of civilization's process of desertification being repeated here. Less than 5% of the original ancient forests of the U.S. remain. Some species which have already become extinct due to industrial society's progress are:

Maryland darter, Harley sucker, Owen's and Leon spring pupfish, thick-tail chub, San Gorgonio trout, Emerald and Royal Silver trout, (river ranging) Lake Sturgeon, and many Pacific N.W. Salmon runs are now extinct, Passenger Pigeon, Palas Cormorant, Labrador Duck, Heath Hen, Guadalupe Petrel, Great Auk, Carolina Parakeet,

Many others, such as the Wolf Grizzly, Bison, Wolverine, Fisher, and too many others -plant and animal- to name, have been extirpated from most of their former habitat

With the spread of toxic technological society, its hordes of grazing "livestock", chemically based agriculture, and insatiable demand for "timber & resources South America, S.E. Asia, Siberia, Northern Canada, and other last remaining natural lands of this earth are being devastated. With mining, pollutants, and urban sprawl it is not forests alone which are being destroyed. Much of the world's wetlands are gone--drained for agriculture and urbanization. In the Gulf of Mexico off the Mississippi River delta there is a "dead zone" 300 miles long and ten miles wide. Other dead zones in the seas and oceans are found in the Mediterranean, the Mideast, and off portions of the European and North American coasts, due to toxic pollutants.

In the Ocean, the producer of the majority of the earth's oxygen, the phytoplankton, are in decline--due to pollutants and the increase in ultra-violet radiation due to ozone layer depletion. The declining ozone layer is another "improvement" from civilized society caused in large part by cfc chemical compounds (thank Dupont and I.C.I.).

Already there are blind rabbits in Chile, a global decline of sensitive amphibian species, and rising skin cancer rates. Australia and Canada regularly issue warnings regarding public health safety for severe ozone depletion days. (the US doesn't participate in this "politically dangerous" policy of informing its citizens.)

We have inherited the legacy of centuries of hierarchal "civilizations" which operate to satisfy the greed of a few at the expense of nature, wildlife, other peoples and cultures, and the laboring, enslaved, and imprisoned classes of their own societies. From warlords priestdoms, fiefdoms, kingdoms, feudal societies, slave holding-invading societies, to the 'modern' multinational "New World Corporate disOrder" - or U.S. Corporate Feudal State; the majority of humans have behaved like the domesticated genetically inbred critters they eat--an easily manipulated herd to placate and satisfy the material desires and psychotic indulgencies of the wealthy and their corrupt governmental powers.

Today this process continues at unsustainable exponentially increasing rates. And while society feigns newly acquired "greeness", the deforestation and ecological destruction escalates globally. Yet remember, Imperial corrupt Rome became "concerned" with recycling and deforestation shortly before it too collapsed. These current whacked-out societies, --in which diversity is scorned, women, people of color, gays, free spirits, anarchists, and activists as well as the laboring poor are targeted and oppressed, which holds millions of people imprisoned--subsists by one species arrogantly over-populating, sucking the life-blood from other species and the earth, upon which all life depends. Psychotic in behavior, afraid of "wilderness" and nature, with its sterile schools, laws, and rigid codes -in which even ones own body is "illegal" and must be covered up (no free commodities here) is running jesus and hell bent to create armageddon on earth. No wonder so many folks attempt to escape into reality altering substances.

Human society has become an infestation out-of-balance with the natural world. We must either radically and compassionately change--or suffer the catastrophic fate which happens to any species --such as insects--when they exceed their natural roles and their impacts reach epidemic infestation proportions.

It is far beyond time to pull the t.v. plugs, smash the screens, shake off the lethargic apathy, drop the wage-slave yoke of daily drudgery, ask serious questions, open our awareness, and take action for the besieged life of this earth.

There is one more species in which we are in danger of losing: the natural, wild--or in the case of most folks reading this--feral humyn. One who knows how to survive within their ecosystem without spending dead presidents at the corner store. One that exists free from the dictates of corporate clocks schedules, and inane corrupt government laws--laws which exist primarily to protect the "property" and interests of wealthy fools standing deep in the blood of wildlife nature, the conquered, enslaved, and laboring poor. The choice is yours; you can live the drama of survival -or go as cattle into the abyss.

Why'd They Leave Europe?

overcrowded cities
impoverishment
lack of work
corrupt rule, wealthy greed
rural lands already taken
-or too expensive to buy
jails full to bursting...

life in a "civilized" cage
without room to be

yet they had an escape, here
in these then wild lands
part of nature once again
relearning the wiles of survival
foraging, hunting in
dance with seasons
chance a companion
existence without
guarantee of self-survival
with freedom, such is enough

but "civilization" would not remain
on lost ancestral shores, but
followed, like a ball and chain
followed, a weak slavering cur
corrupted with greed
sniffing along
each newly opened path
oozing through
every crevice of opportunity

and slavery, war, government
the wealthy, the servile
dogged the footsteps
of those who pursued "frontier"
theft, murder, usurpation
of natives and their lands
paraded in the wake
of those who chased "escape"

gone now, or falling fast
are the once wild lands
cities overcrowded
lack of work, but
no lack of poverty
corruption again rules
while the wealthy drool with greed
rural lands already taken
or too expensive to buy
jails full to bursting...

life in a "civilized" cage
without room to be

the incorporated wealthy
bought the powers that be, long ago
spoon fed, their newspapers tell you
what they want you to know
t.v. and radio
replace the community fire
dangling trinkets hypnotize
cogs in the profit machine
well schooled,
obedient..., yet

what of the questions
which they cannot answer
-how do some
own so much?
once native land
in whose murdered blood
does the wealthy wallow?
their laws
to protect the rich
held so sacrosanct
while the future of existence
is being:
felled, milled, mined,
polluted, contaminated,
shot, bombed, jailed,
and carted to the bank...
and too many stressed families
caught in the quagmire
chasing dollars to pay more bills
stocking the coffers of the wealthy
the coffins of the future
too busy
to look beyond monotony...

but this time no "foreign" shore awaits
in this new world-corporate order
of no escape

meanwhile the wild lands,
the free peoples
have been backed into a corner
by the cold steel machines
and flimsy paper laws
of slobbering corporate fools

and what happens,
we all know,
when something
wild and free
is cornered...
no escape? -for whom?

the choice is ours!

-asante

LAND EXCHANGES

Corporate Timber Grabs

BY ROBIN HOOD

Under the canopy of old ponderosa pines and douglas fir trees a marten pauses, scenting the air in its quest for sustenance. Young pileated woodpeckers call insistently for food from their nest in an old pine snag. A half mile away a goshawk swoops towards an unsuspecting ground squirrel scampering through shooting stars and blue camas flowers. An olive-sided flycatcher, who arrived from South America but a few weeks earlier, perches atop a tall pine, taking a momentary break from feeding forays for its young. The early morning forest is filled with the songs of vireos, pee wees, flycatchers, sparrows, wrens, and chickadees. A rufous hummingbird flits among the many flowers of spring. At the edge of a meadow still wet with the last melting snows of winter a wolverine pauses, satiated from feasting on an elk, killed and cached by a cougar. While in an old woodpecker hollow in a nearby snag a family of young flammulated owls sleep. Far below steep slopes, submerged in cool creek waters flowing from melting snows and mountain springs, a cluster of salmon eggs sits anchored, nestled among the rocks. The embryonic life within awaits emergence.

Though this area has remained untouched by the "man-aging" hand of modern humans for centuries, if the federal land agencies have their way it will soon be torn and rent by the roaring steel engines of bulldozers, chainsaws, skidders, and trucks. Unbeknownst to the wildlife, whose territories are defined by the travels and travails of survival, the forest in which they live has been proposed for "disposal" by the federal agency entrusted with its care. It is part of over 90,000 acres of public Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in Northeastern Oregon to be traded for 70,000 plus acres of private lands in the Northeast Oregon Assembled Land Exchange (NOALE). This forested "parcel", like thousands of acres of others, is to be traded to a timber corporation for logged-over land filled with stumps and sparse seedlings deemed "more important" and "easier to manage".

Land exchanges of public lands for primarily cut-over corporate "timberlands" are the growing rage among corporate profiteers and their government servants across the Western U.S. Indeed, these exchanges are being touted as "good for the economy and the environment" by a pathetic alliance of corporations, government agencies, and mainstream "environmentalists". But what is really going on? How did a few giant corporations get title claiming ownership of millions of acres of land? Land which in the Western U.S. less than two hundred years ago was wild open and free--a natural paradise home to native peoples and abundant wildlife for millenia.

For years corporate timber has given little thought to cutting sustainably. Large landholders such as Weyerhaeuser, Plum Creek, Boise Cascade, Crown Pacific, Louisiana Pacific and others had acquired millions of acres of forested lands. These former native, and then--forcibly taken--"publically owned" lands were acquired by corporations primarily through the illegal usurpation of Congressional railroad land grants.

End Corporate Dominance Over Ecosystems and Communities

These corporations' titles to "their" lands rests upon the shady shaky foundation of a series of corrupt deals involving the assistance of generations of politicians--bought and paid for by corporate campaign contributions--and the helpful approval of the corrupt courts of the U.S. corporate "Just-Us" system. These corporations also had easy access to the public's National Forest and BLM lands through decades of destructive timber sales. The moonscape legacy they have made of their own land is well known, as is the logged, fragmented devastation they have helped wreak upon public forestlands.

Consequently, as activists have slowed or stopped some logging of old-growth forest habitat on public lands, corporate timbers' appetite has increased. With land exchanges they have created a way to get around federal laws protecting wildlife, forest habitat, and water quality. Essentially, timber sales are being disguised as land exchanges--private stumps for public trees.

Complete with color-coded maps of "disposal" and "acquisition" lands, the exchange often resembles some nightmare corporate Monopoly game from hell. The game essentially goes something like this: Road, clearcut or heavily log all the trees that can be economically accessed on private corporate lands, then trade them for publically owned old-growth forests. These forests are then logged at a profit while the public pays the tab for restoration on the newly acquired devastated lands.

The exchange process itself is usually controlled by the timber corporations or a for-profit land exchange corporation (often created with "seed money" from the timber corporations). Clearwater Land Exchange, a profit-seeking venture reputed to have been started with money from Boise Cascade and L.P., initiated and has been designated facilitator of the Northeast Oregon Assembled Land Exchange by BLM. In a February 15, 1996 letter from Clearwater to BLM (obtained through the Freedom Of Information Act) the for-profit venture clearly states whose interests it represents, telling the BLM: "Remember the timber companies control the transaction and can only be satiated with the federal timber lands."

Most of the land exchanges involve federal corporate-welfare subsidies in the form of "cost-share" agreements, and the Northeast Oregon exchange is no exception. The federal government is to pay Clearwater half the costs of land surveys and timber assessments. These payments are in addition to all of the administrative costs, which are to be assumed fully by the BLM. (In a preliminary estimate federal cost-share was set at $270,000 while the total exchange estimate was set at $870,000.) Meanwhile Clearwater stands to potentially reap millions in profits--at the expense of wildlife, ecological heritage, and taxpayers.

Land exchange profiteering ventures such as Clearwater have a track record of over-appraising logged-over industry land, under-appraising federal public lands, and misrepresenting the amount of actual old-growth forests being traded away from public ownership as well as the actual conditions of the industry lands being acquired. In the Northeast Oregon Land Exchange the BLM is complicit in such misrepresentations. The actual amount

(Cont. next page)

of old-growth forest to be traded away is over four times that which is reported in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the exchange. (This discrepancy is due in part to the BLM's use of blanket old-growth formulas--10 o.g. trees per acre--which obfuscates the reality that much of the public "disposal" forests are ancient forests which have had little or no previous logging.)

In order to make these huge logging operations disguised as land exchanges palatable to mainstream enviro-groups (and any wary public who may be watching) they are usually presented as achieving various conservation goals, much like the "forest health/salvage" hoax. A common ruse used to frosting coat these illegal schemes is the "elimination of difficult to manage, isolated parcels" of public land in order to "consolidate public lands into large blocks of contiguous habitat". Often the supposed "isolated parcels" are in reality adjacent to other publicly owned lands. In this case, the BLM lands are sometimes adjacent to national forests and state lands.

In Northeast Oregon an additional pretense is being used to justify the exchange: achieving public ownership over large sections of important salmonoid waterways in the John Day River system. However, not only is most of the industry land already logged, many of the publically owned ancient forests to be traded are at the headwaters of tributaries to this river system. The EIS fails to assess or disclose the serious devastating sedimentation that would result from logging these headwaters forests.

Serious flaws also exist in the "logic" of consolidating public land holdings by trading isolated, difficult to manage parcels. Precisely because many of these isolated areas have not been 'man-aged', they often provide excellent centuries-old habitat. Many of these areas serve as dispersal habitat and connecting corridors between larger blocks of habitat. They fill an irreplaceable role by providing foraging, nesting, and dispersal habitat; clear, cool waters; and stopover areas for far-ranging wildlife such as wolverines, migrating birds, and potentially wolves, as well as elk, deer, and wild horses. It would be ecological foolishness, as well as criminal folly, to trade away these areas to commercial logging, leaving the only viable wildlife habitat remaining as disparate blocks of public lands seperated by miles of industrial timber and private lands devastation. Instead, with so many wildlife species experiencing serious population declines, extirpations, and in some cases imminent extinction, it makes far more sense to assess whether many of these isolated areas have potential to become core pieces of connecting corridors between the larger seperate blocks of public lands. Wildlife species, many of which are territorial as well as migrational, need dispersal habitat --both for their young as well as to allow for genetic intermixing, so necessary to prevent inbreeding and maintain species health. Such a far-ranging, yet so essential project, could begin seeking cooperative agreements, conservation easements, and/or potential acquisition of critical corridor areas. However, at this time such studies have not been done, let alone even imagined, by federal agencies responsible for public land management.

While the many issues arising in these land exchange proposals may at first seem complicated, the more one looks through the misrepresentations, outright lies, and justifications made by federal agencies and corporate profiteers, the more a single simple issue clearly emerges. At bottom, beneath the piles of agency EIS papers, these trades are just another chance to log ancient forests on public lands for corporate profits (or in some cases to develop/mine/over-graze. etc.). Some of the many exchanges currently being fought are:

*Huckleberry Mountain/Weyerhaeuser Exchange--near Seattle, Washington, it includes land originally traded to Weyerhaeuser in a previous exchange, which was then clearcut and traded back to public ownership for yet more ancient forest.

*Plum Creek/I-90 Exchange--also near Seattle, WA, it was pushed through as a congressional rider by Senator Gorton (R-WA) on the fall 1998 appropriations bill. Supporters include the Sierra Club, whose officials were won over by the inclusion of corporate lands near the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area. This exchange would result in the logging of two ancient forest roadless areas in the Gifford Pinochet National Forest--unless your opposition helps stop it!

*Northeast Oregon Assembled Land Exchange--scattered over ¼ of Oregon, this exchange would trade over 92,000 acres of BLM public lands for over 70,000 acres of private land, resulting in the logging of thousands of acres of rare east-side old growth forests.

*Crown Pacific Land Exchange--near Bend, Oregon, it would trade over 31,000 acres of public land for over 34,000 acres of private timber cut-over lands, resulting again in the logging of ancient eastside forests. This exchange is currently being contested in federal court.

*Triangle Land Exchange--Northeast Oregon, it would trade 4,863 acres of Forest Service lands for 7,410 acres of private and timber industry lands. As with NOALE Clearwater Land Exchange is the proponent, and public old-growth forests would be traded away to be logged.

*Land Exchange WAOR 50525--located in Northeast Washington, it traded 4,500 acres of mostly forested land containing old growth forests to timber companies in exchange for mostly shrub-steppe habitat. The trade was between BLM and Clearwater Land Exchange. It was found to be illegal by federal court, however BLM and Clearwater had already exchanged titles--rending the decision moot. Having gotten away with such blatant illegalities, Clearwater, BLM, and the Forest Service are continuing with similar illegal schemes in Northeast Oregon (mentioned above).

Other land exchanges are occurring or have occurred from Arizona to Montana, Colorado to the Pacific Coast. It is part of the continuing saga of usurpation, a saga of cold corporate greed. Left in its wake is devastation--stumps, mudslides, extirpations, extinctions, and vanishing ancient forests. Land exchanges, like corporations, are just another manifestation of this insanity.

So what can we do? As with all things, power exists in action, not in mere words alone. Power exists in connecting with the land itself, with nature. It exists in educati ng ourselves and others, and together taking creative inspirational actions and risks in support of life--of living earth. If you live near any of these trades, get to know the land, help document, hike, and educate. Take action at the offices of the "just doing my job" bureaucrats who would so readily offer up these lands for trade and destruction. Act against the corporate-owned politicians who assist such corrupt folly. And go directly to the corporations themselves, to their subsidiaries, their offices, their homes, their yachts, and private clubs. Take non-violent creative direct actions.

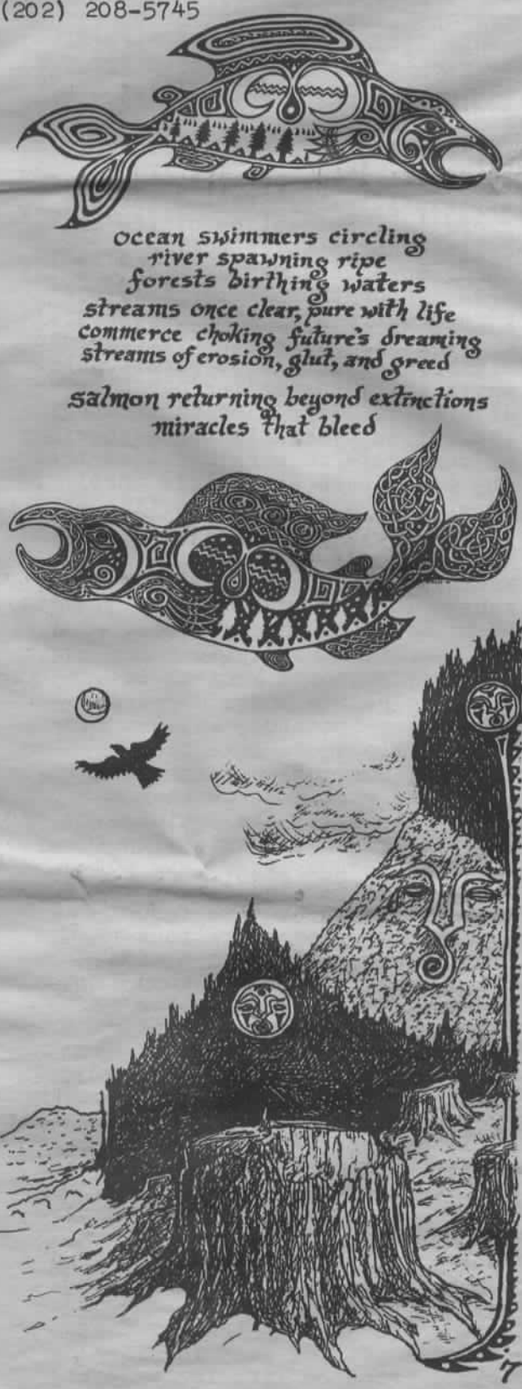
And finally, remember: these corporations involved do not have clear legal title nor moral right to the lands they claim they "own". These lands were stolen from the public, and before that they were stolen from the native peoples and from nature. These corporations are but paper fictions licensed to operate in our names--supposedly for the greater public good. There is a difference between individual private property and corporate property. In a truely democratic society of educated sovereign citizens excercising responsible oversight, these corporations would long-ago have had their charters revoked and their assests seized to help begin the many restoration projects needed in the wake of their profit-seeking devastation. For more information contact:

Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project
HCR 82, Fossil, Oregon 97830
Western Land Exchange
POB 95545
Seattle, Washington 98145-2545

Communicate with your local officials and the following--join the growing demand that these land exchanges be stopped and a criminal investigation be begun:

USDA-Inspector General (Forest Service)
POB 23399
Washington DC 20026
(202) 720-8001

USDI-Inspector General (BLM)
1849 C Street NW, Mailstop 5341
Washington DC 20240
(202) 208-5745


Ocean swimmers circling
river spawning ripe
forests birthing waters
streams once clear, pure with life
commerce choking future's dreaming
streams of erosion, glut, and greed
salmon returning beyond extinctions
miracles that bleed

(cont. from page 2)

for the few people heading up big corporations to pit us against each other so that entire classes of people are used as scapegoats for inequities really created by the unequal division of wealth and power. Thus we have the propaganda scapegoats of "welfare mothers", so-called "illegal immigrants", gays and lesbians, environmentalists, ethnic minorities and the criminalization of youth used to keep the spotlight off corporate power and government collusion. Likewise, progressive movements in the U.S. have evolved keeping class, racial, gender and cultural differences and barriers intact, organizing by issue and locality rather than organizing collectively around common goals and joint strategies.

Fighting corporate rule on an abuse by abuse, issue by separate issue basis is rather like whacking at a many-headed Hydra that simply keeps growing new heads. Shouldn't we recognise that there is a common system of control that is causing all these problems? The corporations are changing the rules of the game behind closed doors, globalizing the extent of their power with new rules like the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, that would superscede the national and local laws on which we rely to protect workers, civil rights, the marginalized sectors of society and the environment. Meanwhile, as David Brower has said, environmentalists don't have victories, only holding actions--when fighting in corporate-controlled arenas like the regulatory agencies and the courts. The same goes for other activist movements today.

Environmental justice activists are fighting corporations like Texaco in southern California over institutionalized racism through gross toxic pollution of low income neighborhoods while activists in other movements may be fighting the same corporations separately over rainforest destruction or workers' rights. It's time to overcome our differences enough to work together while still respecting our cultural diversity. It's time to strategize and act to dismantle the mechanisms of corporate rule rather than treating each abuse as if it's unrelated to all the others. It's time to recognize the corporate bull behind the matador's cape of regulatory agencies and go after the real root causes of our various issue problems.

To do this, we must question our own ingrained assumptions and basic societal precepts born of decades of being raised under corporate rule. For instance, why are corporations allowed to take over the commons, our public space, and determine what goes on there? Corporations log the National Forests originally set aside for wildlife because they were not the most productive forest lands. Most of the productive forest lands were stolen by corporations in the first place, both from native people and through railroad land grants meant to revert back to settlers, so the concept of corporate "private property" must also be challenged. By definition, corporate property should be public property and under public control, since corporations themselves were meant to be merely servants to the public interest, to be controlled by the People's will. Yet corporations now control the airwaves, public events, and through police power, even the streets and sidewalks.

There's another issue: Why do citizens get put away for long prison terms or life for property crimes and political beliefs while corporations literally get away with murder? When heads of corporations knowingly allow the escape of known toxic chemicals, killing people and ecosystems, that's not considered violence. So it's a definitional question. Who is deciding what the definitions are? Certainly people, not legal fictions, should be deciding these matters of life, death and planetary survival. The ozone layer is being destroyed for corporate profit, not because alternatives to ozone-depleting chemicals don't exist.

In this context, charter revocation is clearly not a punishment. It has very little to do with the corporation itself. If someone has cancer and a surgeon cuts the cancer out, it's not to punish the cancer. It's to protect the body. The largest corporations have become a cancer on the body politic, an assault on our ability to govern ourselves, to function democratically. Corporations are concentrations of private power--increasingly used not just to do commerce, but to affect politics, shape the society, define the people--for instance as "consumers" and "workers"--and to wield the powers of sovereignty, to be a governing force. So in order to be socially responsible to each other, to be accountable to the generations who struggled before us and to future generations and the Earth, we must prevent private power from overcoming us and diminishing our ability to govern ourselves, to act like sovereign people.

How did corporations in this country attain such power? With the Civil War and the coming of the Industrial Revolution, many corporations were created, such as railroad corporations, land corporations, grain, manufacturing and many others. The people running them began to realize that the whole system of chartering and Quo warranto proceedings and the relationship between sovereign people and the corporation as a subordinate entity set limits on what they could do. So starting in the late 1860's, they set out to transform the law and the culture. Over the next forty years, using mostly the federal courts--especially the Supreme Court--they got corporations the rights of persons, due process and equal protection of the law (by misusing the 14th amendment, intended to protect the rights of freed slaves) and they got protection for property rights of corporations. Between 1880 and 1920, hundreds of state laws were declared unconstitutional because they were considered invasions of corporate property rights. Most things having to do with investment, production, organization of work and commerce were declared beyond the authority of the People. This was the creation of the mythical entity, "the market". This was the origin of the myth that we cannot control this supernatural force called "the market", that all our dreams and aspirations must be subordinate to its driving force. This corporate-imposed myth sets the context for employees on company property not having First Amendment rights, free speech or freedom of assembly, even though the corporation retains all these privileges. People in this country are raised to accept that somehow we have no authority over the investments a corporation makes, the nature of production, what products are made and what technologies are used. Managerial perogative over these decisions came about through doctrines concocted by the courts, not through legislation made by elected representatives.

In an industrial society, these investment, production and work decisions are shaping our communities and our lives. Most of the average person's life is spent at the workplace. Yet someone else is determining the work we do and how much we receive for our efforts--heads of corporations. Why should we accept this control over our lives? Corporate myths are taking over as suicidal realities--for instance, it appears from what we do as a country that our highest societal value is unending economic growth for U.S. corporations--a completely selfish, unsustainable and unrealistic concept. If a corporation grows 12% per year--considered low these days--every eight years, it will double. This is why the forests, ocean fish, diversity of species, a clean atmosphere and human rights are all disappearing. Not for human need--many people are still homeless and starving--but for corporate greed and high consumption by a minority of the world's population. It is thought that for everyone on the planet to have the lifestyle of the average European, we would need two more planets. U.S. citizens tend to be even more wasteful than Europeans.

Our culture of resignation--our acceptance of corporate rule as inevitable and too powerful to fight --is causing planetary destruction and cultural genocide. If we were making these decisions over production and investment ourselves rather than letting a few insulated, wealthy CEOs decide everything, we would probably have saner and more humane patterns of investment, production and consumption. This was the dream of the Populist movement, people who rose up as a mass democratic movement in the 1880's and early 1890's. They understood that corporate heads were mounting a counter-revolution and farmers, workers and intellectuals organized to stop it. They were not talking about regulating corporations around the margins or curbing their excesses. They were saying this is inappropriate for a free people, a self-governing people. We can't have corporations having so much power and determining our lives. They were talking about ownership and control, about defining the corporations.

The Populists were ultimately defeated by the reformers who conceded power to the corporations,

who relied on trying to shape corporate behavior through regulation. We can see where that has gotten us today--corporations are given liscense to pollute, and by not defining the nature and limits of corporations, the so-called Progressives allowed them to take over more and more public space--our culture, our minds, and through biotechnology and cloning, patenting and controlling life itself.

However, we can still turn this around. And what choice do we have but to try? Some may think it is impossible because corporations will run away and take our jobs and money, because corporate foundations may not give money to our groups. But is it realistic to keep fighting corporation after corporation, one harm at a time, by their rules, over and over again? Is it realistic to let them take away our rights, our clean water and air, our forests, our pure food, our health care, our education, our elections, our legislators? Isn't it more life-affirming, more inspiring to mobilize, to take away the civil and political rights wrongfully given these artificial entities?

Our biggest obstacle is ourselves. We censor ourselves, our goals, all the time. We censor our tactics and strategies because we're immersed in corporate icons, images, propaganda and millions of dollars of corporate media manipulation. We don't demand what we want and need. That's what we need to begin changing. We need to redefine ourselves from being "consumers" and "workers"--cogs in the corporate machine--to being self-governing people. Then we can begin to define what corporations can be and do and have authority over all the subordinate entities our society creates. We need to move to arenas and language that infer our authority. Quo warranto statutes are still on the books in most states.

For instance, the National Lawyers' Guild recently called upon the Attorney General of California to initiate revocation of charter proceedings against Unocal, a major oil and gas corporation, for causing numerous oil spills and toxic releases and infringing on human rights through contracts with Burma and other oppressive regimes. While the Attorney General rejected the proposal, the Guild used the case to greatly increase the visibility of corporate control issues in California. The New York Attorney General succeeded in dissolving tobacco corporations' public relations firms that mis-represented the health consequences of tobacco smoking. Other charter revocation attempts are taking place in Alabama by a judge going after the tobacco companies themselves and in Maryland, against against the Neutron Products corporation for leaking radiation and endangering the public in Maryland.

The important thing about these charter revocation attempts at this point is not whether charters are revoked but that they raise the possibility of people's control over corporations in public discourse. For to really succeed in re-establishing people's authority over corporations, we need to change the political climate by going beyond the limits set for us by the corporate taken-over legal system and the corporate-controlled legislature. Every successful movement for lasting, systemic change in this country has had to involve large scale mobilization of the public and step outside established legal boundaries, as with the Civil Rights movement, the Women's Suffrage movement and the Anti-war movement.

Now that transnational corporations can shift their destruction from one region to another, we must form links and networks of international solidarity more than ever before. A global dialogue was held in Finland in September, 1998, to discuss how to "expand people's spaces in the globalizing economy." It was apparent from the contributions of about 100 participants from over 40 countries around the world that responses to the globalization of finance and corporate power must be as varied as the cultures and political situations in different regions. Tentative agreement was reached on many aspects of the problem and several possible strategies, including work by those in corporate power-base nations of the North to dismantle the mechanisms of corporate rule, mobilizing people in the South around poverty issues and new models of participatory development and work on the international level to influence fence-sitter countries not to join disasterous globalization of finance initiatives such as the Multilateral Agreement on Investment. It is clear that much more work needs to be done to solidify an effective international network of mutual support to coordinate our efforts across the world to end corporate rule and make room for real Democracy. So this process will be continuing with further international strategy meetings and global dialogues.

Yet this is not just work for some activists in international circles. This work begins at home--not only agitating but also building--building trust between different cultures and movements across traditional barriers of race, gender, class and issue. To build real Democracy and real alternatives to corporate dependency, we must become independent and self-sufficient on the local level in both developing our ability to govern ourselves cooperatively and wisely as sovereign people who look out for one another and strive to protect the Earth, and in developing our physical local and regional capacity to meet our communities' basic needs. We need to build real community as we build self-sufficiency in economy, community security and cultural richness. We also need to return meaning to work and pleasure--away from consumption to fill the spiritual void to rediscovering spiritual value in mutual aid, extended families, the work of our hands and the Earth that gives us life.

Economic and social alternatives to corporate dependency already exist but need more public support to grow and flourish as reliable alternatives. Economic alternatives include co-ops, worker collectives, community-supported agriculture, alternative currency and barter fairs. For example, in Argentina in a time of great poverty, 20 people got together and started exchanging food that they each grew. This simple barter developed into what is now a barter network of over 100,000 people across Argentina, complete with its own alternative currency that can be exchanged for goods and services anywhere in the network. Trading now includes clothing and other goods and services such as dental care, as well as food. The bartering occurs twice a week along with related socializing and is thus capable of supplying most of people's daily needs as a self-supporting parallel economy.

Social alternatives include town meetings, shared cross-cultural events, potlucks to get to know each other, "barn" raisings, neighborhood festivals and basic mutual aid that builds community. An example of community-building

in an urban area is a project called "Our United Villages" in a low income neighborhood in Portland, Oregon. Seeing the poverty and violence in his neighborhood, one person started a neighborhood center where people could come and post their needs for goods and services and others could come and post what they could offer. An important key to the success of the project is that you can't just call someone and order what you want; the two people have to meet face to face and work out a trade or discounted terms. This has the effect of lessening annonymity and neighborhood violence and restoring trust and caring for each other. In this case, the project is funded by salvaging building materials from buildings being demolished and selling them to the public at less than wholesale prices.

A rural example of taking initiative in arenas of authority is actions taken by family farm and ranch groups now working to ban corporate farming from their states. This was successfully done through ballot initiatives and amendments to state constitutions in Nebraska and South Dakota. A family farm and ranch group in Idaho is considering forming industry collectives to localize production decisions and benefits. Cooperative, farmer and rancher-controlled stores could market local produce, meat and dairy products produced with more humane and environmentally sound practices than that of typical corporate factory farms. As small farmers and ranchers feel the pinch of soaring inflationary prices for equipment; depressed prices for crops, meat and dairy products and increased competition from corporate agribusiness; the stage is set for the next Populist movement of rural people seeking equity and control over corporate forms of industry and finance.

The work has already begun. The ripples of resistance are already spreading. There are as many ways to participate as there are different situations. Starting to make a difference is as easy as talking about all this--to friends, relatives, neighbors; at gatherings; through letters to the editor. If people controlled and defined corporations once, we can do it again.

Echoes from the past:

A corporation in law is just what the incorporation act makes it. It is the creature of the law and may be moulded to any shape or for any purpose that the Legislature may deem most conducive for the common good.

-Pennsylvania State Legislature ·1834·

The judgment sought against the defendant is one of corporate death. The state which created, asks us to destroy, and the penalty invoked represents the extreme rigor of the law. The life of a corporation is, indeed, less than that of the humblest citizen, and yet it envelopes great accumulations of property, moves and carries in large volume the business and enterprise of the people, and may not be destroyed without clear and abundant reason...Corporations may, and often do, exceed their authority only where private rights are affected. When these are adjusted, all mischief ends and all harm is averted. But where the transgression has a wider scope, and threatens the welfare of the people, they may summon the offender to answer for the abuse of its franchise and the violation of its corporate duty...The abstract idea of a corporation, the legal entity, the impalpable and intangible creation of human thought, is itself a fiction, and has been appropriately described as a figure of speech...The state permits in many ways an aggregation of capital, but, mindful of the possible dangers to the people, overbalancing the benefits, keeps upon it a restraining hand, and maintains over it a prudent supervision, where such aggregation depends upon its permission and grows out of its corporate grants...the state, by the creation of the artificial persons constituting the elements of the combination and failing to limit and restrain their powers, becomes itself the responsible creator, the voluntary cause, of an aggregation of capital...the defendant corporation has violated its charter, and failed in the performance of its corporate duties, and that in respects so material and important as to justify a judgment of dissolution...Unanimous.

-New York Supreme Court ·1890·

Indeed, it is doubtful if free government can long exist in a country where such enormous amounts of money are...accumulated in the vaults of corporations, to be used at discretion in controlling the property and business of the country against the interest of the public and that of the people, for the personal gain and aggrandizement of a few individuals.

-Nebraska Supreme Court ·19th century·

When a corporation is formed under the general incorporation act, for the purpose of carrying on a lawful business, the law, and not the statement or the license of the certificate must determine what powers can be exercised as incidents of such business... To create one corporation that it may destroy the energies of all other corporations of a given kind, and suck their life blood out of them, is not a 'lawful purpose.'

-Illinois Supreme Court ·1889·

It has long been recognized, however, that the special status of corporations has placed them in a position to control vast amount of economic power which may, if not regulated, dominate not only the economy but also the very heart of our democracy, the electoral process...The State need not permit its own creation to consume it.

-Dissenting Justices U.S. Supreme Court ·1976

Article XII, section 8: The exercise of the right of eminent domain shall never be so abridged or construed as to prevent the Legislature from taking the property and franchises of incorporated companies and subjecting them to public use the same as the property of individuals, and the exercise of the police power of the State shall never be so abridged or construed as to permit corporations to conduct their business in such manner as to infringe the rights of individuals or the general well-being of the State.

-California Constitution ·1879·

I Don't Want a Job

I don't want to work for the C.I.A.
C.I.A. spells homicide
I don't want a job
work most the day nearly all my life
wondering what's going on outside...

Corporate scums overtaking the Earth
they ooze into your veins
vote for the industry of your choice
get another fix of the lottery dream
shoot up good 'cause you'll never get the frosting
unless you become the makers of the cake
and who's left licking the spoon then?

I don't want to work for the B.I.A.
B.I.A. spells genocide
I don't want a job
work most the day nearly all my life
wondering what's going on outside...

Of course we're all to blame, not them--
they own the courts, the cops, the jails
and the press, they shine their shoes
It's all our fault for wishful daydreams,
slacking off, for nights of daring to love--
we're supposed to be the useful bodies
molded by our trades
their hands pull our strings.

I don't want to work for the E.P.A.
E.P.A. spells ecocide
I don't want a job
work most the day nearly all my life
wondering what's going on outside...

Idle hands the devil's workshop
the T.V. shows us what to be
it's 9 to 5 or graveyard shifts
when pension comes you're too far gone
your children carefully tracing your steps
they say No-No-No--why can't I?
It's quitting time while I can still see
another way to be. —Karen Coulter

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remembering

we are a fractured people
we "modern" humans
where are our visionaries,
dreamers, healers, and
shamans?
homeless in the streets,
locked inside
the asylums,
isolated in their rooms,
seeking refuge, sustenance,
and guidance
in the remote wildlands
which yet remain...
where are our warriors,
uncompromising strategists,
fearless ones of fire?
locked in the prisons,
detention school
reformatories,
drowned in alcohol, drugs,
caught in the fierce violence
of street survival,
teetering on the edge
--as is all humanity,
and so many other species
with it--
on the edge
of the abyss.
with few or no elders

rooted in the timeless dances
of earth
to guide
to teach how to flow,
weave and dance
with the forces, mysteries, and
power of life,
of earth,
of spirit.
with shattered, wounded,
-or no- cultures
left to sustain, embrace, nourish,
and guide.
with little semblence remaining
of real come-unity,
comraderie.
with oh so many lost
shackled into wage slavery,
beguiled by the corporate
societal maze,
misinformed, doubting,
and in denial
from crib to playpen
to school yard
to factory or profession
career or (de)menial labor
to t.v. la la la
entertain me
wallow me in vapidity land
numb me in drug land
sugar me in fantasy land

lottery lottery choose me me me
'til t.v. in death we gravely part...

where are our dreamers?
they are waiting in your own sleep.
where are our warriors?
they are weeping
in your own heart.
where are our elders?
they are the earth beneath our feet.
the rivering raining
oceans of waters
glistening in the starlight of
your eyes.
the fires, passions,
venting forth
from volcanoes
racing in our blood...
remember
remember dreamer
warrior
reclaim self
reclaim sovereignty
re-wild
for none
can end the madness
dance the freedom
open the cages
but yourself.

-Asonta' Riverwind

End Corporate Dominance!

Share the Earth With Generations Yet to Come

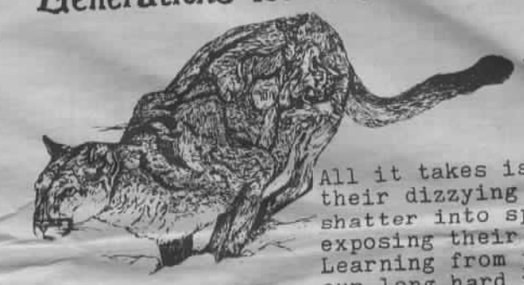
Regional Conference to End Corporate Dominance over Ecosystems and Communities

Conference Statement

- The current struggle against corporate power (oppression, concentration of capital and inequity) has a long history.
- Corporate control is the root cause of many of our issue problems
- Corporations must be required to promote public welfare. If they fail to act on behalf of the public welfare, people must have the authority to disband them.
- Corporations should not have the rights of persons (eg. right to free speech). Individuals who profit from corporate activity must be held fully accountable for the corporation's acts.
- Regulatory reform to address abuse on a corporation-by-corporation, issue-by-issue basis has not averted global environmental and human catastrophe.
- The crisis has accelerated and reached a global scale. Requires urgent action!
- We must take action to dismantle the mechanisms and eliminate the root causes of corporate control for healthy communities and ecosystems in the future.
- Corporate rule is neither necessary nor inevitable and is surmountable!
- Alternatives to corporate dependency already exist and need our support to grow and spread.
- Alternatives to corporations have been around longer than corporations.
- We need to pay attention to, and protect, indigenous ways of organizing and sustainable cultures that are not totally destroyed by corporate-colonizing practices. We need to address corporate and governmental theft of indigenous and other people's lands.
- We don't need corporations but we need clean water and air, fertile soil, healthy ecosystems and each other.
- The institutions we create must be under our control to meet our real needs in balance with nature's laws and limits.
- We do not live in a true Democracy. We must build a real Democracy that empowers each individual and promotes self-sovereignty from the local level.
- To build a Democracy and alternatives to corporate dependency, we must work together, respect our diversity, and build trust for strong cross-movement alliances.
- We need to create international links of solidarity and coordinate our efforts to avoid exporting our problems to others.

--Drafted by attendees of the 'Crafting a Conference Statement Discussion' during the afternoon of Sunday, May 31, 1998 at Portland State University.

(Adopted as a majority statement by vote in the last session of the conference, May 31st, 1998)



Then and Only Then

by Karen Coulter

All it takes is an earthquake--
their dizzying towers of glass and steel
shatter into splintering fragments
exposing their inner, raw reality....
Learning from practice,
our long hard years of getting nowhere
it's time to see "them" for who they have become--
valueless automatons who could be more
trapped within a system they created
of electronic money flows, non-reality
converted into deadly sins
because we let them bend our minds
use our hands
because we are too comfortable in the luxuries
red with the blood of others
soon to end with the end of the earth
that sustains all life--
the end of the ozone layer
the end of the forests
the end of indigenous cultures
the shaming of the working family
all for transitory profit for the wealthy few
unless we stop cowering, hiding from the truth
unless we honor traditions rooted in life
unless we live with the earth
as part of our larger family
return to giving from only taking
then and only then
when we join hands
and take risks
then and only then
will the Earth trying so hard
with her floods, her fires
her earthquakes shaking the towers
receive the extra push she needs,
the circle completed
as we humans focus on the real threat
of ourselves,
dancing in the street
for the revolutionary re-emergence
of the wild flowers
then and only then
will we be free inside.

to walk these once wild lands
see the tumult and havoc
left in the wake
of the saws and machines
of "modern" humans
nature's query calls: what song
will be left in your wake
to sing of the deeds you have done?

Corporate America is Taking Your Mind

It enters you through your eyes
like maggots devouring your brain--
normal thinking comes in two waves
but T.V. lobotomy removes one.
Finding it hard to think?
Zoning out after your day?
Uncle Sam wants your mind--
T.V. makes you succumb...
T.V. bashing! It's smashing!
An axe or hammer will do
Get yourself out from under the daze
of eerie flickering blue...
Ever see an innocent child
hypnotized by the tube?
Corporate America wants your bucks--
They'll sucker whoever they can get
Do you know who your kids are tonight?
What system molds their minds?
Scenes of shootouts, betrayals, violent rape--
what makes soldiers want to fight?
Where are you
before the world crashes?
Glued to the single eye?
Do you have so many days to live
that someone else telling you what is--
a picture painted by power and greed
a series of dots on a plastic screen--
is your choice over experiencing life?

-Karen Coulter

(cont. from pg.2)
on us to buy things from them, work for them, obey them, and limit the scope of our dreams to the confining, limited reality they impose on us. These are all cracks in their armor we can push through like grass growing up through the concrete and crumbling it.

6. "Corporate authority over us has been legitimized through established legal precedents; corporate power is legal--therefore there's no way to oppose it."

Im reality, the legal system is to a large extent molded by public pressure turning into new cultural mores and political pressure. For instance, it used to be illegal for blacks to ride in the front of the bus (etc.) in many parts of the country; this is no longer illegal due to a mass movement against discrimination. Actions taken to change fundamentally bad laws sucessfully usually must step beyond the law--eg. boycotts, strikes, direct action, occupations, rallies, marches, etc. These are tried and true tactics in successful organizing campaigns to change the status quo.

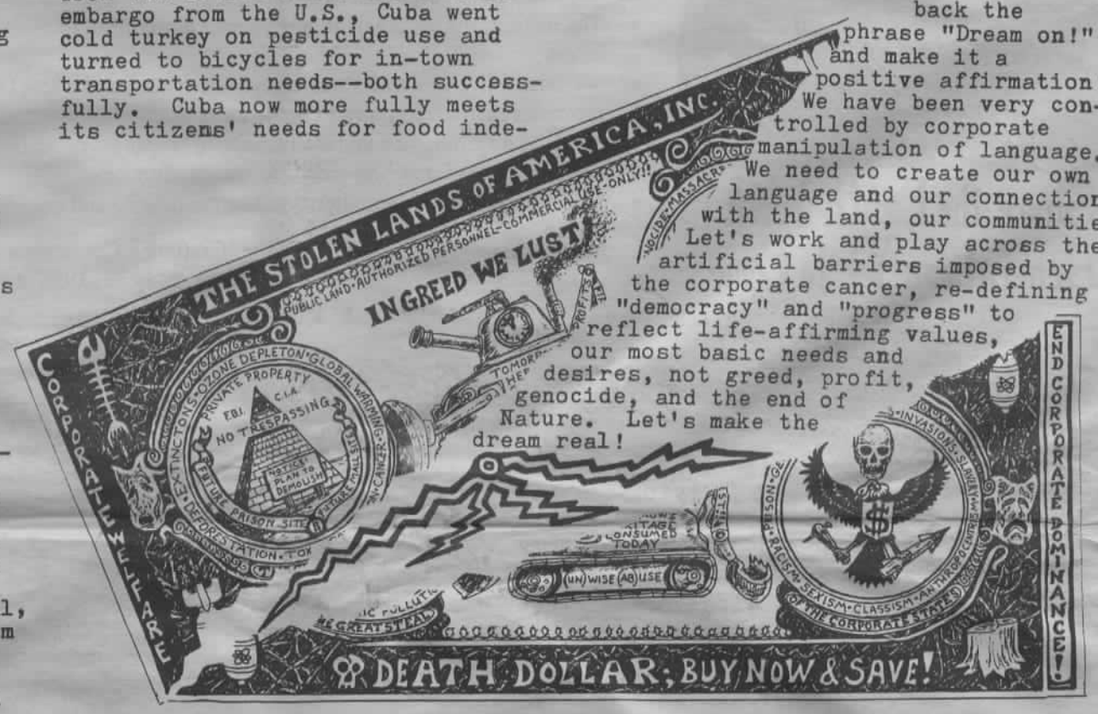
7. "If we stop corporate abuses in one place, they will simply take their factories, jobs and pollution somewhere else."

First, transnational corporations are doing that already anyway, using international trade agreements like NAFTA and GATT to shift production (and pollution problems) to countries with lower labor and environmental standards and cheaper minimum wages. Second, to stop this trend and force corporate accountability to communities and adherence to stringent environmental and labor protection laws, we need to dismantle the mechanisms of corporate control directly; regulation has not worked. While we have beem enacting regulatory band-aid reforms, they have been changing the rules of the game. Corporations have been tossing out unwanted restrictions of local, state, federal, and international laws by making them unenforceable due to multilateral trade agreements such as NAFTA and GATT. The Multilateral Agreement on Investment would even make nations subject to corporate lawsuits for trying to enforce national laws setting standards restrictive to destructive trade. Realize that we cam seize corporate assets, criminally prosecute corporations and find new ways to hold them accountable for their actions; they are licensed in our name. Of course, so as not to be NIMBY ("not in my backyard") in our efforts, so as not to allow the corporations to pass our problems on to others, one of our immediate tasks is to form strong links of international communication and solidarity for our work. In some cases, we may need to educate other nations and cultures, based on our experience, on the need to actively oppose corporate colonization. Corporations seek to divide and conquer us; our challenge is to find common cause while allowing for cultural and political diversity, to unite our various struggles against corporate dominance here and internationally.

8. "There are no alternatives to corporate control; corporations house us, feed us, give us jobs...."

There are plenty of alternatives to the existing corporate system--what's more, they are more life-sustaining and community-nurturing alternatives and have been around helping people much longer than corporations. These alternatives include: the use of extended families to provide community services such as childcare and care for the elderly; the use of natural herbs, physical therapy and diet programs for healing; the use of barter (direct trade) instead of currency to obtain needed goods amd labor from each other locally and regionally; the use of alternative currency such as is now in use in Madison, Wisconsin, in which bills represent amount of labor exchanged for goods; local production of organic food on a small farm scale; worker-owned business cooperatives; abandoned simpler (and safer) technologies (such as bow saws, candles, oil lamps, wood stoves, home canning of food, waterwheels, windmills, subsistence hunting, gathering wild plant foods, sharing, wildcrafting herbs, etc.); simpler means of transport (bicycles, a local economy, towns designed to have business diversity easily accessible to pedestrians, etc.); basic carpentry; use of alternative building methods and materials; barn-raisings; community harvests; etc. For instance, in the face of no more economic support from the Soviet Union and a trade embargo from the U.S., Cuba went cold turkey on pesticide use and turned to bicycles for in-town transportation needs--both successfully. Cuba now more fully meets its citizems' needs for food independently. Bicycles proved cheaper, less polluting, and easier to fix than automobiles, leading to cleaner cities and a more personally interactive community life. Denmark is considerimg going organic in its agriculture and Swiss Air is planning to serve 90% organic food to its passengers, both recognizing the corporate toxins (and bio-engineered grains to go with each pesticide) as a dead-end to a healthy future. Such initiatives show we are primarily limited by our fears and lack of imagination, not by the absence of alternatives.

Let's take back the phrase "Dream on!" and make it a positive affirmation! We have been very controlled by corporate manipulation of language. We need to create our own language and our connection with the land, our communities Let's work and play across the artificial barriers imposed by the corporate cancer, re-defining "democracy" and "progress" to reflect life-affirming values, our most basic needs and desires, not greed, profit, genocide, and the end of Nature. Let's make the dream real!



Suggested Further Reading: Radical Democracy by C. Douglas Lummis
The Populist Moment by Lawrence Goodwyn
When Corporations Rule the World by David Korten
Who Will Tell the People? by William Greider
The Case Against the Global Economy by Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith
In the Absence of the Sacred by Jerry Mander
The Unconscious Civilization by John Ralston Saul
Assata by Assata Shakur
The Fifth Sacred Thing by Starhawk
Agents of Repression by Churchill and Vanderhill
The War at Home by Brian Glick
The Final Empire by William Kotke
Monocultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology and Biopiracy by Vandana Shiva
Prisons we Choose to Live Inside by Doris Lessing
Crises of the Republic by Hannah Arendt
"Taking Care of Business: Citizenship and the Charter of Corporations" by Richard L. Grossman and Frank T. Adams
"Multinational Monitor" by Essentials Publications, Washington D.C.
"Corporate Power and the American Dream: An Economic Workshop for Working People" by Rutgers Labor Education Center, 1995
"The Emergence of Corporate Rule and What to Do about It: A Set of Working Instruments for Social Movements" by Tony Clarke, in collaboration with other members of the IFG working committee on corporations (International Forum on Globalization, 1996 - IFG, 1555 Pacific Ave., San Fran,CA 94109)

A Partial List of Organizations to Contact:

Program on Corporations, Law and Democracy (has a resource list of articles, brochures, and videos) P.O. Box 246, S. Yarmouth, MA 02664-0246

Contributions are also welcome!

End Corporate Dominance Alliance
2 NW 3rd, Portland, OR 97209
(ECDA hosts a regional ECD Conference in Portland, OR--write for info.)

Earth First! Journal
P.O. Box 1415
Eugene, OR 97440

Alliance for Democracy
P.O. Box 683
Lincoln, MA 01773 (AfD has chapters all over the country: write re: the one nearest you.)

for additional copies of this to distribute in your area, contact:
End Corporate Dominance
HCR - 82
Fossil, OR 97830

Democracy Unlimited of Humbolt County
P.O. Box 27
Arcata, CA 95518

Public Information Network
(for research on corporations, primers, guides)
P.O. Box 95316
Seattle, WA 98145-2316

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